



## DESCRIBING THE IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** To understand occupational stress on employee performance focusing on office hours using digital technology such as WHATSAPP and Zoom application during Covid-19 Pandemic. **Design/methodology/approach:** Quantitative research is a scientific method of using a questionnaire to gather numerical data. This type of research refers to counts or measures. This research answers how and when a specific phenomenon occurs. The Extensive literature review to be first conducted, followed by the nature of the questionnaire distributed with respective respondents have with regards to the topic will be held. The target population of this study comprised lecturers, senior lecturer, associate Professor and professors in a private university in Malaysia. The data will analyse using SPSS version 26 software. **Findings:** The topic is of very important but unfortunately has not been given its due attention. The proposed study shall be among the first attempts to explore how occupational stress focusing on office hours using digital technology such as WHATSAPP and Zoom application can give a significant impact on employee performance. It would create awareness for policymakers to consider the necessary measures to help support children from single-mother homes towards their academic achievements. **Practical implications:** the findings of the proposed study will have theoretical and practical implications for the respective institution. The outcome of this study will be an additional reference material to other academia to design strategies to deal with increasing falling standards of education of lecturers during and after pandemic Covid19 pandemic. It would also make it necessary for all lecturers to be responsible and committed to their socialisation and learning process towards their knowledge, skills and career development. Finally, the undertaking of this research will equip the researchers with the necessary skills to undertake further inquiries in the future.

## 1. Introduction

The current Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) that has taken the world by storm is one such infectious diseases that are dangerous to public health. By extension, it poses severe challenges in our coping strategies/existence. As the biggest threats to the world health, the World Health Organization, the Centre for Disease Control, and many institutions in the world are working around the clock to control the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and to come out with a vaccine. However, there is the psychological impact of the COVID-19 on the populace. Distress and fear about the epidemic can be overwhelming and a source of deep emotions in adults and children alike (CDC, 2020). After gathering preliminary information, the research can narrow down the problems from an original broad base and define the issues of concern more clearly. As we have explained earlier, it is critical that the issues statement is unambiguous, specific, and focused, and that the problem is addressed from one academic perspective. No amount of proper research can find solutions to the situation if the critical issues or the problem to be studied is not pinpointed.

Providing a solution to a problem encountered in the work setting is purposed of the study in most applied research. For instance, a manager might be interested in determining the factors that increase employee commitment to the organisation, since an increase in employee commitment may translate into lower staff turnover, less absenteeism, and increased performance levels, all of which will benefit the organisation. The purpose or objective of the study thus explains why the study is being done. The statement of the research objectives should be brief but communicate the focus of the project. Nevertheless, no study has done in Malaysia, and few studies have done, in a few countries such as Pakistan, Hong Kong, United Kingdom and the United States. Therefore, it indicates that stress leads to lower employees' commitment. According to (Elovainio et al., 2002) highlights that occupational stress inadvertently leads to a little organisational commitment by the employees and therefore results in increased labour turnover. Thus, (Willingham, 2008) notes that employees respond to stress at work in a variety of ways, many employees show up for work, but do not work to their full capacity, other employees decide that the stress is too much and quit voluntarily.

The American Psychological Association (2007) reports that 52% of employees say that they have considered or decided about their career such as looking for a new job, declining a promotion or leaving a job based on workplace stress. Some former employees start their businesses and remove themselves from the employees' workforce population

altogether (Hewlett & Buck Luce, 2006). Therefore, it indicates that stress may lead to reduced employees' commitment. The ability to manage stress in the workplace can make the difference between success and failure of an institution. According to (Roger, 2001), increased labour turnover, an indication of low organisational commitment, robs the organisation tenured and valuable workforce.

Job stress is considered rising and has become a challenge for the employer and because high-level stress results in low productivity, increased absenteeism and leads to other employees' problems like alcoholism, drug abuse, hypertension and host of cardiovascular issues (Meneze, 2005). Also, that employees are the essential resource to an organisation and therefore, stress depletes organisations their valued support. Work stress and its causes have been studied a lot. (Agrawal et al., 2001) indicated that work stress nowadays is not something new, not anything unknown. However, stress is still causing havoc in the workplace, such as stress management stress in employee performance. Hence, (Kathie & Lingle, 2007) notes that only 50% of employers offer stress management programs to employees primarily because they are perceived to have a low impact on employee attraction and retention. In Kenya, companies employ several stress management strategies which include, paying their employees on time, role modelling, proper communication channels, welfare programs, training and development, among others.

However, despite all these efforts, there are still reported stress-related issues at these difficult economic times, for example, absenteeism, high labour turnover, frequent illnesses, conflicts, unexplained loses, sluggishness among others posing challenges in service delivery. That highlights the ineffectiveness of the stress management strategies to curb labour turnover and therefore enhance employees' commitment. It is against this background that this study seeks to establish the effects of stress management on employees' commitment to employee performance. Previous researchers have focused on the impact of the various stress management strategies on employees' performance globally (Van der Stede, 2000; Zietlow, 2001; and Robbins, 2005). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, none of these local and international studies has been done to establish the effect of stress management strategies on employees' commitment to employee performance. Finally, no study has done previously in the same topic pertinent to occupational stress on employee's performance focusing on office hours using digital technology such as WHATSAPP and Zoom application during Pandemic covid19 (Myto, 2020).

### 1.1 Research Questions

- I. How does occupational stress can influence employee's performance with digital technology in WHATSAPP application?
- II. To what extent occupational stress can influence employee's commitment with digital technology in Zoom application?

### 1.2 Research Objectives

To understand occupational stress on employee's performance focusing on office hours using digital technology such as WHATSAPP and Zoom application during Pandemic Covid19.

- I. To determine the influence of occupational stress on employee's performance with digital technology in WHATSAPP application.
- II. To investigate the extent of occupational stress on employee's commitment with digital technology in Zoom application.

### 1.3 Research hypothesis

- I. There is a relationship between occupational stress on employee's performance with digital technology in WHATSAPP application.
- II. There is a relationship between occupational stress on employee commitment with digital technology in Zoom application.

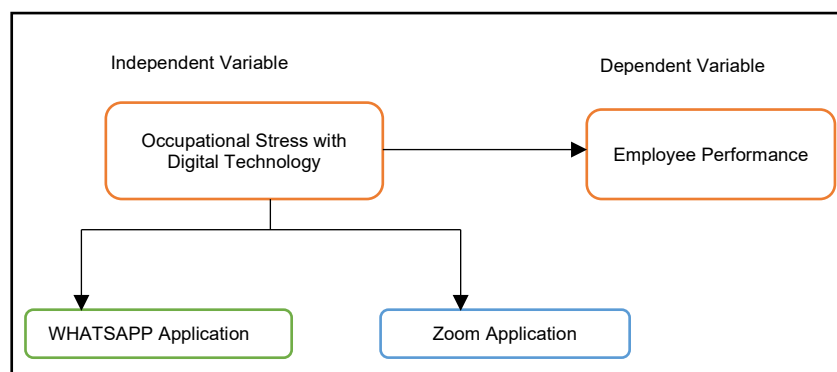


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Hypothesis in Occupational Stress and Employee Performance

## 2. Literature Review

This character includes an overview of the definition and description of expiation grade of employee performance on stress management, stress reduction and occupational stress. An organisation’s ability to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage depends mostly on the specific skills and knowledge supply by its employees, its human resources (Wang, He, & Mahoney, 2009; Wright, McMahan, & McWilliams, 1994). The administration of this Human Resource, in any case, has turned out to be progressively troublesome. Statistic and working environment changes, for example, a rising number of ladies in the work drive, a maturing populace, a lack of talented specialists and expanding globalisation and rivalry have grown the weight on representatives (Beauregard and Henry, 2009). The outcome is an expansion in mental medical issues like pressure or sadness (American Mental Affiliation, 2015; De Longis, Folkman, and Lazarus, 1988; Richardson and Rothstein, 2008), and expanded truancy (Halpern, 2005). Regardless of whether representatives are not authoritatively sick, presentism or other work weight may compel representatives to keep on working, pressure in the work environment can, in any case, diminish work fulfilment and profitability (Gosselin, Lemyre, and Wayne, 2013). The subsequent deliberation of the capacity of workers to apply their particular abilities and learning diminishes the aggressiveness of associations.

Stress is a state of an inside state which manufactures physical and enthusiastic weight. The word stress can be characterised from numerous points of view, sometimes it’s useful, which is “Eustress” a term of positive pressure. At some point it’s destructive which “Misery” is a term for negative pressure. Intense is regular stress which shows up from foreseen request or dislikes past interest, this sort of weight may be exciting and leaving if its day and age is short. At the point when intense pressure shows up much of the time, it’s called long-winded pressure, such sort of stress ordinarily appears in unreasonable people. Intense and Rambling pressure can deal with effortlessly rather than constant pressure. Constant pressure is astounding to extreme worry; there is no excite and energy in it; however, it is destructive for wellbeing. This sort of stress harm psyche and body, in this paper we endeavour to concentrate each one of those variables that in the end turned into a reason of constant worry at hierarchical level (Harish, S., Rachita, G., 2013 and Kathirvel, N., 2009).

### 2.1 Occupational Stress of Employee Performance with Digital Technology

According to Koys & Shaw (2001) in rules of human resource, the procedure for leave can be deliberate or automatic. Meanwhile, deliberation is to workers plan to leave the association. Automated concepts are to administrators to make representatives excess. Hence, representatives’ deliberate of turnover had adverse impacts hierarchical adequacy, effectiveness and profitability.

Therefore, according to Ullrich & Fitzgerald (1990), occupational stress is a principal factor affecting workers’ activity fulfilment and hierarchical responsibility, which are vital turnover indicators. A word related pressure happens when there is a lopsidedness between the requests of the work put and a specialist’s capacity to adapt. Less quality of work-life, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, organisational culture, job stress, burnout, long shifts, and work-family conflict have been identified as variables that could force employees to leave their workplace (Mosadeghrad, 2013). Nursing is a high-hazard and upsetting calling. Medical caretakers frequently are stood up to with first occurrences or intense stressors. Being in charge of patient results, the intricacy of sickness treatment, and vulnerability concerning the treatment of patients, proliferation of maladies from patients, and managing to pass furthermore, biting the dust individuals have been distinguished as wellsprings of word related worry among attendants (Robinson, J. R., Clements, K., Land, C., 2003). Burdensome tasks, excessive workload, insufficient time, staff shortage, excessive working hours, irregular shift work, conflict with other colleagues and high job demands were also reported as nurses’ occupational stressors (Anjazab, B., Farnia, F., 2002; Bianchi, E., R., 2004; McGowan, B., 2001).

### 2.2 Digital Technology and Stress management

Nowadays, digital technology is one of the parts in lifestyle. Therefore, according to Gini and Mathijs (2018), there are following as below table.

Table1: Manage of Digital Technology Stress by Gini and Mathijs 2018

| Things to Do                                          | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Go on a Digital Detox                                 | Make sure the device did not engage with the social network for a while, such as for a day, for a week or for even a more extended period. Turn off the notification. Therefore, according to The British Psychology society by Christian Jarrett 2018 is taking a break from the social network will lower your physiological stress levels. |
| Set yourself clear smartphone social usage boundaries | Today, in our real-life experience, we spent our time with phones for watching television, eating, and chatting with our friend and family.                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Rebalance your work                                   | Set mod to pocket of boundaries from start and end of days. Make sure, email notification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| and home life                                             | for the specific times of the days. It set of auto-reply messages to the sender. Therefore, a highly common practice to manage their wellbeing.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Audit and curate your social media feed                   | It is essential to maximising of positive with the social media in different posts on your feed. Any comments are making you feel bad. Hence, for the negative communication and experiences on social media, it is related to higher levels of depression and anxiety.                                                                                       |
| There's an app for that: use technology to your advantage | the world has a hundred of apps which have specifically been designed to help to make better promotion in physical and mental health. That is for reducing stress and anxiety to get the best apps to look for mindfulness. Therefore, cognitive behaviour therapy to through of challenge in negative thoughts, behaviour and beliefs or combination of two. |

### 2.3 Digital Technology of WhatsApp and Zoom Application

Today, the cross-platform of the most popular in terms of instant messaging in the 21 century are WHATSAPP and Telegram application in the worlds. There are, for smartphone users, to exchange text, image, video and audio platform. Both of this platform mostly are used for daily such as for professionalism task or not professionalism. Mainly, this platform for the staff to easily communicate with others in a platform such as shared the document, assigned responsibility, a meeting called, discussion and location. Hence, this is the more accessible platform to conduct the task during office hour. It is more effective and efficient to handle and monitor. The essential features of the smartphone for productivity task is to using notetaking, organisation, and social media to connecting each other's using WHATSAPP. Additional, Telegram is one of the thousand application more too practically for professional transferring the documents and information (WHATSAPP Inc. 2009).

Technology Zoom is probably the most well-received collaboration tool that we've seen at Fox in 20 years. There is no other tool that has brought people closer together than Zoom (Doug, G., 2020) at 21st Century Fox. Zoom is removing 40 minutes time limit on individual basic free account for all education field affected by the Covid-19, in terms of educating Over Zoom. Here is how teachers, administrators, and students can successfully spin up virtual classrooms, participate in online classes, and use Zoom for distance education: Resources to help you and your teams safely and successfully transition to a remote work environment using Zoom. Zoom is a web-based video conferencing tool with a local, desktop client and a mobile app that allows users to meet online, with or without video. ... Zoom offers quality video, audio, and a wireless screen-sharing performance across Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android, Blackberry, Zoom Rooms, and H. 323/SIP room systems (The Star, 2020).

### 2.4 Covid-19 Pandemic

The outbreak of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is a diverse family of viruses that can infect both humans and animals. Several types of coronaviruses cause mild upper respiratory illness in humans, and others, such as SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, can cause more severe respiratory disease. In late 2019, a novel coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2 emerged in China. This virus has since spread to many other countries throughout the world. An infection with SARS-CoV-2 causes a respiratory illness called COVID-19 (Noorhisham, 2020). COVID-19 can have potentially serious complications, such as trouble breathing and pneumonia. Because of this, it is important to be able to recognise the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and how they differ from other conditions.

The symptoms of COVID-19 declared by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the average incubation period for SARS-CoV-2 is 4 days. However, it can range anywhere from 2 to 14 days. Not everyone with a SARS-CoV-2 infection will feel unwell. It's possible to have the virus and not develop symptoms. When symptoms are present, they are typically mild and grow slowly. The most common symptoms are including fever, cough, fatigue, and shortness of breath. Some people with COVID-19 may sometimes experience additional symptoms, such as the runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, headache, body aches and pains and diarrhoea. Some observations suggest that respiratory symptoms may worsen in the second week of illness that appears to occur after 8 or 9 days (Xiao, W. X., 2020). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 1 in 5 people with COVID-19 become seriously ill. These individuals can develop severe pneumonia or respiratory failure and may require oxygen or mechanical ventilation. Coronaviruses are one of the many types of viruses that can cause the common cold. It is estimated that four kinds of human coronavirus account for 10 to 30 per cent of upper respiratory infections in adults (Meredith. G., 2020).

### 2.5 Government Policy

Regarding the outbreak of the epidemic, the Ministry of Higher Education has issued a series of safety measures for student convenience following the enforcement of the Movement Control Order. The Ministry of Higher Education (KPT) is aware of the level of readiness of some UA and IPTS in terms of infrastructure and lecturers in the implementation of online learning. The HEIs also note that there are IPTS registered as institutions that offer fully online Teaching and Learning. UA and IPTS that utilise full online education in the implementation of PDP UA and



IPTS can continue their online education provided that all students have access to, the lecturer's readiness and infrastructure to the fullest. For UA and IPTS that do not fully utilise online learning, in implementing PDP is not allowed to continue online learning activities considering the importance of students. So that they do not miss out if they do not have access to the internet (BH Online, March 2020).

### 3. Methodology

This study is basic research where it can generate a body of knowledge by trying to comprehend how occupational stress focusing on an office hour using digital technology application can give impact on employee's performance during pandemic Covid19 (Mukesh, K., Salim, A. T., & Ramayah, T., 2013)

This research answers how and when a specific phenomenon occurs. The Extensive literature review has been first conducted. Then the nature of the questionnaire distribution undertaken with regards to the topic, with respective respondents, has been done—the target population of this study comprised lecturer from Private University. The data will be analysed using SPSS version 26 software as a tool for organising and managing data. It helps to think differently about our research, uncover more and back it all up with rigorous evidence. (Karuthan, C., 2014).

A conceptual framework in this study represents beliefs on how particular phenomena or variables or even a concept is related to each other. And an explanation of why believe that these variables are associated with each other. Both model and the theory flow logically from the documentation of previous research in the problem area. Integrating logical beliefs with published research, taking into consideration the boundaries and constraints governing the situation, is pivotal in developing a scientific basis for investigating the research (Karuthan, C., 2014).

### 4. Significance of research

The topic is of very important but unfortunately has not been given its due attention. The proposed study shall be among the first attempts to explore how occupational stress focusing on office hours using digital technology such as WHATSAPP and Zoom application can give impact on employee's performance during pandemic Covid19.

It is also would create awareness for policymakers to consider the necessary measures to help and support lecturers in higher education towards their work achievements or performance.

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